

General Suggestions and Principles for Contact Work

Practice the discipline of *learning names*. Use whatever system will help best.

Look for ways to serve young people - taking a group home (but only those of the same sex!), keeping charts for games. Caution must be used, however, to prevent giving the impression of buying their friendship.

Do not attempt to be one of the kids. We are leaders aware of our age, yet loving and genuinely interested in them and in their affairs. They need to see *adult models*.

Through established friendships, *seek to know others*. Sometimes we can receive a lot of help from those we know. But be careful to love kids for who they are and not what they can do for you or the club.

Do not force your way into certain social situations where you would not be welcome, such as parties or some group discussions. Pray always for *sensitivity* here.

Avoid making fun of young people. This is the most dangerous kind of humour.

Be careful about talking too much of your accomplishments or your own high school prowess.

Be yourself. Do not try to impress with overdone or clever antics, or by imitating others. You don't have to be a comedian, athlete, personality-plus, to love them.

Ask questions about school life when in conversation with high schoolers. Most people enjoy talking about these things.

Ask God for a sincere interest in young people. They can spot the feigned interest. We might not like all they do, but we can appreciate them as people.

Be casual. Don't work too hard at being friendly, with a lot of hand shaking or rapid patter, unless this is natural to you.

Develop a *sense of humour*. Find what fits you best.

Be adaptable. Expect to have to change pace from time to time. We cannot predict the adolescent behaviour.

Keep close personal records of significant contact, including the adult community. Some sort of diary is of great value, especially in our prayer life.

Seek to gain friendships with all types of young people, both school leaders and followers. Many of them will have great potential for leading their friends or particular activity group.

Cheerfulness and enthusiasm are contagious.

In many areas, adults are not welcome in the halls of a school. *Study the situation carefully.* Have a valid reason for being there. You may have to forego any contact work in the buildings.

Every school situation or neighbourhood is unique. Work out a plan or strategy that fits your local picture.

Pray for those you have met, or want to meet. Enlist prayer support from interested adults or Christian young people.

Contact work is never finished. There are always new ones to get to know. It is this continued effort to be their friend that wins the right to be heard with our message of Jesus Christ. Once the right has been won, work on the right of continued hearing.

Realise *contact work is identification* with people in a real way in the sense that Christ "the Word, became flesh and dwelt among them."

Pray for kids as your eyes touch them. *Ask God to lead you* to those He wants you to meet. Make it a trusting experience. God's timing is not always ours.

Pray that God will lead you into deeper, relationships with specific kids. 'Ephesians 3:18, "That you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ, and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension."

Be a person of *integrity* as so beautifully cited in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

Do not draw people to yourself and keep them for your security reasons. *Give friends every possible opportunity to grow.* You are building the kingdom of God, not kingdoms unto yourself.

Remember the whole person, the family they come from, closest friends. Take opportunities to introduce yourself to the parents / carers of the young people you're working with and their friends.